

By Michelle Conrad, Larae Watkins and Nathan Wittmaier

A Jump-start for Alternatively Certified CTE Teachers, Counselors

"THE NEW TEACHER INSTITUTE IS MISSOURI'S INTRODUCTORY PROGRAM FOR NEW CAREER EDUCATION TEACHERS WHO ARE MOVING DIRECTLY FROM THE WORKPLACE INTO THE CLASSROOM UNDER A TEMPORARY ALTERNATIVE CAREER EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION."

▼ The New Teacher Institute is designed to prepare alternatively certificated teachers for the first days of school. Below, teacher leaders take part in a day of preparation before their first day with their content-area cohort groups.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MISSOURI CENTER FOR CAREER EDUCATION

THE FIRST DAYS, WEEKS AND MONTHS of the school year can be a daunting time for new teachers and school counselors, especially those coming to teaching or school counseling from industry or other fields. So what can be done to support these teachers and school counselors, and how can we help them start making connections within their new professions? Missouri offered new career educators and school counselors two key events this past July—the state's New Teacher and New Counselor Institute programs and the Missouri Association for Career and Technical Education's (MoACTE) annual summer conference—as one combined experience to help get that first year off to a good start.

New Teacher Institute

The New Teacher Institute (NTI) is Missouri's introductory program for new career education teachers who are moving directly from the workplace into the classroom under a temporary alternative career educator certification. NTI provides new educators with a jump-start into classroom teaching by wrapping instruction on teaching around the MoACTE Summer Conference and incorporating NTI instruction into MoACTE conference sessions. The seven-day instructional event serves new career educators across all content areas, and is open to secondary, postsecondary and adult educators, as well as apprenticeship instructors.

"Delivering New Teacher Institute at the same time and in the same location as the annual MoACTE summer conference makes sense," said Dennis Harden,

coordinator of career education for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). "Wrapping NTI around MoACTE provides a powerful learning experience that equips new teachers to meet the demands of classroom instruction, and connects them to a network of supportive colleagues."

The institute is coordinated by the Missouri Center for Career Education (MCCE) at the University of Central Missouri (UCM) in Warrensburg, and sponsored by the DESE Office of College and Career Readiness in cooperation with MoACTE. Participants are enrolled in the UCM NTI/Foundations of Education course to earn three credit hours toward their Career Education Temporary Authorization Certificate, or Career License to Teach Secondary or Adult Students. Since the 1960s NTI has served as a "boot camp" for new career educators on an alternative certification path. Over the decades, the goals of the institute have remained constant while the techniques used have grown and evolved. The three main goals for participants in the institute are:

1. Network with colleagues in the career education profession.
2. Understand the role of the career education teacher.
3. Gain the basic skills to survive the first week of school.

Michael Wright, dean of the College of Education at UCM and a former director of NTI, said a synergy between these two key events has been in the mind of NTI planners for a long time. "Tying these

two events together is great,” Wright said. “We always recognized the value of networking and professional development at the MoACTE summer conference.”

Tying in the institute with the MoACTE summer conference goes beyond scheduling and location. MCCE staff and conference planners coordinated the content for teacher and counselor sessions. Joint planning also extended to the opening session, keynote speakers, and the new professionals luncheon.

“The collaboration of the MoACTE summer conference and the New Teacher Institute was a win-win situation for both groups,” said Donna Vossen, MoACTE executive director. “We were able to cut down on expenses for both groups by sharing the opening session speaker and saving on time away from home and school for the teachers who attend both activities.”

She added: “Missouri ACTE gained new members, and the participants were able to see the connection between their jobs and the importance of belonging to Missouri ACTE. Everything they learned was put into practice when the Missouri ACTE summer conference began and they were interacting with their peers.”

Over the past two years, staff at MCCE conducted a ground-up review and revision of the NTI curriculum. In addition to the MoACTE summer conference, the entire content of the institute was aligned to state and national standards for teacher education. Throughout NTI, participants are encouraged to apply general curriculum and instruction principles to their content area. Veteran teachers function as Teacher Leaders guiding small groups of participants, who will be teaching in similar content areas, through activities and discussions. Area career center administrators, DESE staff and other highly experienced education professionals offered their expertise as instructors for the various topics covered in the institute.



▲ Participants in the New Teacher Institute engage in a range of activities and exercises to prepare them to manage a classroom of students. Above, Teacher Leader Roger Massey (far right) works with Health Science instructors on a cohort group activity.

New Counselor Institute

This year, the New Counselor Institute (NCI) was added to serve new school counselors entering counseling from a nontraditional route. While the format and structure were modeled on NTI, the content was specifically designed to assist the new counselor during the first days, weeks and months of his or her initial year as a school counselor. The program was conducted simultaneously with NTI, and each day began with a joint NTI/NCI activity. NCI and NTI participants also interacted during common sessions on topics such as legal issues and learning theory. Like their NTI counterparts, NCI participants attended MoACTE summer conference sessions as a part of the institute.

The initial class of NCI participants brought a range of experiences with them, from former teachers with many years of teaching experience but no counseling, to individuals with counseling experience but no experience in an education setting. As a part of completing the NCI program, participants were enrolled in a three-credit-hour graduate

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course in counseling topics. According to Bragg Stanley, director of Guidance and Counseling Services for DESE, “The New Counselor Institute provides an additional supporting mechanism for our new school counselors—especially those who have entered the profession from an alternate route. Between our statewide mentoring program, which is run through a partnership with MCCE, DESE, and the Missouri School Counselor Association, and our strong partnership with our counselor education programs, we have developed a structure of support that provides a smooth transition into the actual working experience for our new school counselors.”

Continuous Review

To practice what is preached during the institutes, the NTI and NCI curriculum are continually reviewed and updated. MCCE focuses evaluation of both institutes not only on the reviews from participants, but also on teacher and school counselor gains in self-efficacy. Teacher efficacy, as defined by Anita Woolfolk Hoy, professor of educational psychology, is a teacher's perceptions about his or her own capabilities to foster students' learning and engagement. Others define teacher efficacy as the extent to which a teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance, or that as a teacher he or she can influence how well students learn—even students who may be difficult or unmotivated.

Similarly, school counselor self-efficacy is the counselor's perceptions of his or her ability to meet the performance expectations implementing and operating the

components of a comprehensive school guidance program. Self-efficacy of NCI participants is being measured before and after NCI using the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE), a nationally recognized instrument for measuring school counselor self-efficacy (Bodenhorn and Skaggs, 2005). Post-NCI SCSE data is being collected this fall.

By utilizing self-efficacy scales in a paired samples t-test (pre-institute to post-institute), MCCE is able to measure its ability to impact the participants' beliefs on how well they can teach or counsel. The assessment used was the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale—long form (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), which includes 24 items using a nine-point likert scale. Initial NTI results from 44 participants in 2010 showed statistically significant gains on 18 of the 24 items.

Looking Ahead

The 2011 analysis is not yet complete for both NTI and NCI; however, findings from this year will be presented in a presentation at the ACTER conference in St. Louis next month. Visit www.acteconference.com for more information. **I**

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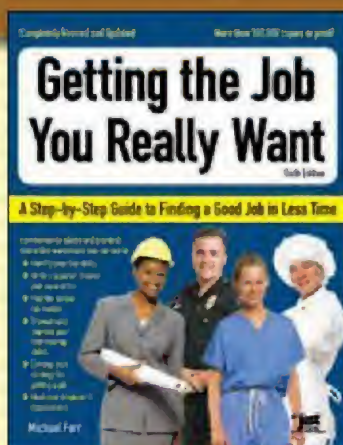
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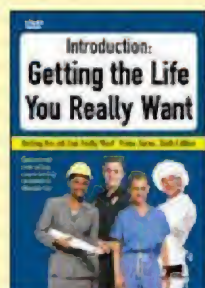
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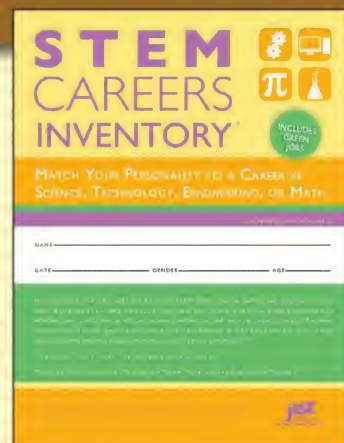
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